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# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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GOOD AGENTS WANTED.

## TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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"And be found in Him [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith!"—PHIL. iii., 9.

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Here are two expressions, the interpretation of whose meaning has filled the world with infinite pamphlets, and lumbers of books, and has given some comfort, I hope, at any rate, as a compensation for the confusion and stumbling of mind which have awaited the explications of *faith* and *works*, or *faith* and *righteousness*.

It is now the current doctrine, not alone of the Protestant church, but of the Roman Catholic church as well, that faith is of God, that faith is an indispensable quality, and that there is no such thing as salvation without faith. I suppose that multitudes of persons have a very vague impression that faith is a kind of celestial salt that God sprinkles into men, which keeps them, and stimulates them, and makes them relishful ; that it is a quality bred, moulded, fixed in heaven, and that it is injected by a divine act ; and that when God has breathed it into men, then they have it, exactly as, in a dark room, a coal of fire was put to a candle in the old-fashioned way, and you blew, and a little flame came, and that was a light. Men have an impression that there is a spiritual quality which grows up in God, or around him ; that that quality is indispensable to salvation ; that when men pray for it, it comes down in some mysterious way ; and that when they once have it in their hearts, it is faith, and

they are salvable ; but that until they have that faith they are non-salvable.

On the other hand, it is supposed that all attempts on the part of men to get to heaven by virtue of right-living, on the ground that their conduct is good, are not only abortive, but to the last degree presumptive. This feeling that conduct and character are not sufficient for hope of salvation has sometimes gone to such an extreme as that nothing is more suspicious than for a minister to preach morality. You have heard it said, and I have heard it said, times without number, "Oh, he is not a sound preacher—he preaches nothing but morality." If he preached high doctrine, deep doctrine, and above all, "justification by faith;" if he preached that though a man lived badly, wickedly, notwithstanding what he had been, with whatever there was in him, he could get this illapse of faith from God and be all right,—then men would not complain of his preaching.

The apostle Paul is here giving an account of his own experience ; and he says that if any man has reason to be confident in regard to his own experienoe it is he :

"If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh [that is, trust in his own personal conduct], I more [than he]. Circumcised the eighth day [he had undergone what was equivalent to our infant baptism], of the stock of Israel [he had the right nation], of the tribe of Benjamin [a very choice tribe out of that nation], a Hebrew of the Hebrews [thoroughbred]; as touching the law [the ceremonial law], a Pharisee [there is only one beyond this, and that is the Essene]; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law [the great ceremonial law of the Jews], blameless, but [and he knew what he was talking about] what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law [he is not speaking about morality, or conduct, or character; he is speaking of ritual, routine observances], but that which is through the faith of Christ."

You will take notice that he makes faith an instrument of righteousness. He speaks of faith as a quality which, existing in a man, sanctifies him. Faith is a means to be employed for producing righteousness.

Suppose a man should speak of the eye in the same way ?

Suppose it should be said, "If a man has an eye, then he can be a philosopher"? Well I suppose no man can be a philosopher without an eye. The eye is an instrument by which he makes observations. But is the eye the end sought, or is it the means by which you seek that end? And is faith a divine quality or disposition of a man, or is it that attitude of his mind by which he comes to a knowledge of God, of Christ, and of spiritual things?

You will observe that Paul does not in any way abandon the doctrine of righteousness as the great end of life. You will take notice that when speaking to Timothy of his departure, the language which he uses is very striking, though it is not emphasized. He says:

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith [that is, the system of faith]: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness [not a crown of faith, but a crown of *righteousness*] which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

It is as if he had said, "I am to have a crown of perfection—a crown which shall include in it that character which I have been seeking, inspired by the example and spirit of Christ, that excellence which I have studied, that conception of manhood after which I have followed, which I have longed for and striven after, but which I have not attained. I shall have the crowning of that ideal as soon as I shall reach my heavenly home."

His righteousness is not that he is going to have a crown, but that there is to be a crowning and completing of his character and disposition and manhood. That was what he was yearning for all his life, and that was what he looked forward to, and that was going to be the event that he should realize, having sought it.

The Hebrew moral nature is celebrated the world over. Some of the best thoughts on this subject are in Matthew Arnold's recent writings on the peculiar contrasts between the Hellenic mind and the Hebrew mind. He has, I think, joined in the affirmation that no more wonderful moral development ever took place than that which took place in the old Hebrew nation. The moral ideas of the world had their

leaven, and largely their model, there. It shows us the force of things invisible and intangible that the laws, the institutions and the civil procedure of associated nations to-day sprang from moral conceptions which dawned in that little pocket of the Orient on the eastern end of the Mediteranean Sea thousands of years ago. The Hebrews struck so deep, and they struck so utterly the great moral laws of God in their relation to human life, and in their associated action, that in its development the world has more and more built itself upon that which was disclosed by them.

Now, the Hebrew moral nature sought perfectness in man. That was its aspiration, its ambition, its ideal. It is true that there was an attempt made among the Hebrews to build up a state, a commonwealth, and afterwards a monarchy and a church. So far as the official personages of the Jewish history were concerned they seem to have been absorbed largely, not in attempts to construct interior manhood in the individual, but in attempts to construct a state and a church, using men for the material ; but the teachers of Israel were never their priests, and the most powerful influences of Israel were never their religious services. In the later periods the synagogue had a function, and did a great deal of work ; but, after all, the foundation of moral power lay in the prophets ; and, with perhaps a single exception, these prophets were never ordained men, or priests. They sprang from the common people. They were automatic. Jeremiah, one of them, is declared to have been called to be a prophet from his mother's womb. He was born to that office and function. Such was the peculiar liberty of this people that whoever among them had a talent could exercise it. If a man was a poet, a poet he might be; and if a woman was a poet, a poet she might be. Or, she might sing, she might prophesy, she might do anything that she could do better than a man ; and that was right. There was that wonderful freedom of action permitted among the Hebrews of old.

Now, persons rose up to judge the people, as Samuel and others, in those times, who were not called or appointed by a vote, nor by a convention, nor by a caucus, but who had the

inspiration to do it. The feeling was in them, and they did it; and they were permitted to do it because they did it well. So, in long procession, came these men that inspired a nobler patriotism and a nobler morality, and that spoke of justice, of truth, of humanity, and of obedience to equitable laws. While the priests were making sacrifices, and teaching men various ritual performances, it was the prophet that was striking bold strokes right at the moral sense of the people, and lifting them higher and higher; and if you attentively read the prophets, you will find that what they were laboring for was a perfect manhood. They were striving to shape men into proportions of strength, and symmetry, and purity and beauty, so as to make them perfect. Manhood was the one thing that they were seeking, and the perfect man in their estimation was a man who acted right in every part of his nature—that is, as we should say, in conformity to law.

Now, to act right, or in conformity to law, is *righteousness*; he who carries himself in accordance with known standards of rectitude, continually, is a righteous man; and through ages righteousness has been the aim which has been set up. He is a true man who is a righteous man. Or, dropping that phraseology, which is encrusted by other theological associations, and giving it a modern form, we should say that that man who fulfils his duty in every direction, who develops all his inward nature, and who carries every part of himself in fullness and in the most manly way, or according to the highest standard or ideal of manhood, is a righteous man, one that works manhood out on the largest and best pattern.

Consider the struggle that has been taking place in the world. It is a sad thing to see, not only how the world has groaned and travailed in pain until now, but how it has *groped* and travailed in pain until now; for every nation has seen in its best men some attempts to work out the development of a higher idea of manhood.

If you take the Greeks, they were attempting to develop an ideal man. Some of them were attempting to do it on the pattern of physical excellence. They bred him right; they drilled him right. They sought to make him a hand-

some man, a strong man, a man that was perfectly healthy, an adept in every feat of arms, an athlete. A perfect man according to the conception of the Spartans was one who was competent to all the functions of a citizen ; who was vigorous in every part of his body. It was a low standard, but it was their conception of manhood.

You will find the standard among other Greeks to have been a certain ripeness of mind. One school required knowledge, as being the test of a true and large manhood. Another school required what might be called intellectual athleticism. As one class required bodily health and physical power, so another class required mental strength, agility, and adroitness. The sophists sprang from the latter class. Others believed that the sense of beauty and symmetry was among the constituent elements of the highest manhood.

Thus you will find that the nations around about were severally striving to develop the ideal of a perfect man ; and their best natures were growing toward it, or trying to.

The Hebrews said, "Fear God, deal justly, love mercy ; this is the whole duty of man." In other words, they had a deep moral conception which included not alone man, but a God of transcendent excellence, invisible and united, not split up and frittered away in godlings as among other nations—one majestic God, as opposed to a polytheistic God ; and they derived from him a nobler conception of holiness and purity and duty. The Hebrews were all the time striving, by their prophets and noblest natures, to fashion men into this grander manhood of righteousness.

A systematic form by which virtue and social conduct were degenerating from this seeking of manhood came into vogue at a later period. While the prophets were alive they rebuked, with the utmost vehemence, the degeneracy of men from their ideals or standards—their tendency to worship religious forms, and to forget that manhood for which alone all forms are of any value. There is a constant tendency to neglect this, and to look after religion—that is to say, the instruments of religion ; and I have never said anything about dogmas or churches or ordinances that begins to compare in sweep and intensity of scorn with the words which

the old prophets uttered in respect to the most sacred things that belonged to the Jews. The Jews' noblest conception of righteousness was the ideal of perfected manhood. It included all justices and all excellences. The Jews regarded manhood as the object of life ; in fact, it was that on which life was to expend itself ; and among the things which were sought for were those very qualities in morality and in daily practical life that would be the evidence of the existence of these great primary forces in men.

But in the old time, as in the time of our Saviour, the external got the upper hand of the internal, and men worshipped in the temple, and at the altar, and sacrifices were made. The priests were splendid, their robes were magnificent, incense was abundant, and so many were the sacrifices that blood poured by streams and rivers from the temple gutters, and they felt that they were doing right. They went through all the ritualistic observances of their religion ; but, meanwhile, they were in point of disposition and morality lapsing, here and there and everywhere.

Now, hear how the prophets came down on them. Amos, reproaching them, says :

"They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch, therefore, as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right [the gate was the place of giving judgment.] Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time. Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you as you have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate."

In other words, "Be pure, be good, and let all your social administrations inure to uprightness and integrity."

Now, then, see how he comes down on their religion :

"I hate, I despise your feast days [yet they were appointed of God], and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies [that is, when the incense is offered up]. Though you offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But

let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Here was a divine protest against ritualistic and external observances of religion, in condemnation of the fact that there was in men no manliness, no morality, no character, no conduct, that conformed to high moral standards.

But this is comparatively polite phraseology as compared with that in Isaiah :

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies [going to church, that is], I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

That is what they were to do. Is that religion? No, not if a good deal of that which is popularly called religion is religion; but is it not the concurrent testimony of the Old Testament that the grand spiritualities which connected men with God gave light and ideal inspiration, and that the great justices and humanities which made men renowned and sweet benefactors to their fellow-men, were the great ends of life to be sought? It was for the sake of making men better in these things that temples were built, that services were held, and that sacrifices were made; and the whole drift of the Old Testament, and of the instruction of these prophetic teachers, was to make a nobler and higher style of manhood, which was called, comprehensively, *righteousness*.

When our Saviour came was there a change? Then did manhood cease to be the end which was sought by the church, by priests, by ministers, by Christian people who sought righteousness? Was there something else sought—namely, "justification by faith"? Was this put in the place of righteousness? I suspect that it is the impression of multitudes of persons that when the new dispensation came in, the old one went out, and that then righteousness was no longer the great end and aim of life, and that justification by faith was

the thing to be sought. And it is on this point that men stumble ; for I aver that there was no change in this respect—that the New Testament was simply to teach a better way of seeking the same thing. It was still to develop this perfect manhood that God sent his Son into the world to die for it. And the Apostle Paul, in the passage of our text, does not say that now he was aiming after faith, as if that was a new gospel, righteousness having been the old one—not at all : he was as much after righteousness as Isaiah was, as Amos was, as any Old Testament saint was.

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is the law [not having that kind of perfection which comes from fulfilling every point and particular of the law], but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

The New Testament is after the same thing that the Old Testament was—to build up men, and to build them up in thought, in moral disposition, in affections, in conduct and character. The Old Testament dispensation attempted to accomplish this by one sort of education, and that failed by reason of the weakness of men : but the New Testament introduced another sort of education, by which the same end was to be pursued—namely, the direct inspiration of the soul of God manifested by Jesus Christ ; and faith is merely a perception of Christ, the eyes of men being opened to this new source of influence. According to the Old Testament dispensation men tried to be good by keeping feast days and fast days, by visiting the temple, by paying tithes, by all manner of observances ; and they failed. These things did not make a large man : they made a narrow and pragmatical man, a conceited man, a jealous, cruel, and persecuting man. The conceit of the Pharisee was beyond all measure.

When the New Testament came in, therefore, it said, “Seek the same great end—righteousness ; but take your conception from the living nature of God made manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the epitome, here is the instruction on which you are to pattern yourselves.” It gave a higher sense of man, a larger scope to duty, and a new inspiration to motive. It brought near to men, not the temple, not the altar, not the sacrifice, not days, not the ritual, not

the church, but the living God ; and so it was called *the new and living way*, in distinction from the old and mechanical way ; but both the one and the other were brought together.

I do not know of anything that is nobler than this strife of the old and the new dispensations for the supremacy of manhood. I go back and read with the profoundest sympathy of the genius, the fidelity and the skill of Phidias, who studied to represent a nobler heroism indicated by the exterior forms of men, and who carved in stone, and more often in ivory and gold, the images of the gods, that were only idealized and ennobled men ; and it was a very grand thing that he was seeking all the time.

I am not one of those who, taking up one of Phidias's statues, would ask, "How much would this sell for if I were to turn it into lime ?" It is the mind that he put upon it that gives it its value. It is the result of his strife to embody a noble conception of manhood.

I see the various attempts of the old legislators to build up nobler states, and I have a profound sympathy for all their endeavors.

I sympathize deeply, also, with the architects of ancient and mediæval times. They were seeking by temples, by the most magnificent structures that ever issued from the mind and hand of man—those monumental cathedrals which are wonderful past all analysis and past all expression—to develop higher and nobler ideals, and they were worthy of admiration and reverence ; I do admire and revere those old monk architects who sat, and thought, and dreamed, and expressed themselves in these magnificent ways.

Three architects sleep under the roof of the Winchester Cathedral—that cathedral which, for grandeur of thought and for translucent and transcendent beauty, stands easily first of all the cathedrals that I ever saw in England or on the Continent. I walked by the tombs of poets, of sages, of priests and of bishops, not irreverent or careless ; but I confess that when I stood by the tombs of the architects, my enthusiasm was greater than when I stood by any of the others ; and I thought it to be a wonderful instance of the kind providence of God, that he should give to these great

geniuses of construction power to rear such a building, and that then they should have the privilege of sleeping under it, and having it for their monument. But when you have taken the measure of the genius of men who make statues that are well nigh immortal, of legislators who found States that stand for generations, and of architects who build mighty cathedrals, much as we admire and reverence them, how much grander is the conception of one who builds the statue of the soul, the temple of the heart, who is moulding, not inert matter, but living vital fire ; who is shaping the interior consciousness of men, and giving them largeness by which they shall possess two worlds, standing here ; by which they shall control elements of time and eternity, being, as they are, at once children of man and of God. A nation or a period that is busy with an ideal of the righteousness of the individual by giving larger scope, and force, and symmetry, and beauty and purity to human nature, stands easily far above all other nations and periods.

The Old Testament sought the grandest ideal, but stumbled by reason of the imperfection of its instruments. The New Testament sought the same ideal, and its instruments were abundantly adequate, though men have again largely thrown them away, and attempted to follow the Old Testament plan, adopting altars, and robes, and various Ritualistic ceremonies ; so that which in the hands of Moses and his followers proved to be incompetent, is still, throughout all the world, striving for a nobler ideal, with most incompetent and oftentimes hindering instruments.

Now, faith in Christ Jesus is not designed in the New Testament, and in the teaching of Paul, to intermit the entrance into the soul of a prepared quality, nor of a condition, nor of a disposition. It is that which is to help men in seeking the great ends of righteousness. We perceive righteousness by a perception of God ; by the opening of our minds so that the divine Spirit quickens and stimulates us ; and in seeking it, the act by which we recognize the Invisible is the act of faith. If I were to use my senses, that would be precisely the antithesis of using faith. You look at things, you see them, you handle them, you weigh them, you measure them,

you test them in various ways ; that is the sensuous way of apprehending them. But men study, they reflect, they pass from seeing things that are visible to thinking of things that are invisible ; and that is generically faith. *Sight or sense*, and *faith*, are two antithetical terms, one representing lower forms of existence, and the other higher forms. Reflection and inspiration are in the nature of faith. Whoever uses the mind in relation to things that *are not seen*, as it is said in Hebrews, performs the generic act of faith. The particular act of faith in Christ Jesus is a use of the higher and reflective faculties which brings the Saviour, a representation of God, up before man's mind as a reality, so that he perceives it, as by opening your eyes you perceive a physical object. All that superior action which belongs to the upper range of human faculties exercised in discerning and bringing nearer to the mind times and things that are remote and are not visible is of the nature of faith.

The righteousness that the apostle Paul gloried in and sought is a righteousness of truth, of justice, of benevolence, of personal purity, of infinite kindness, of lenity, of meekness, of humility, of superior manhood—which he had, for he was one of the noblest men that ever trod the path of heroes, which is a path of thorns. How came Paul by that righteousness which he had ? He says, “I came by it through the sight of Jesus—that is, the inward sight, which was revealed by the Spirit to me. My own righteousness was as filthy rags—that which before I thought of and prided myself on.” Hear how he speaks of it: “I had everything to be proud of. I came from the best nation.” The best nation on earth to you is the one in which you were born. So Paul boasts of being of the stock of Israel. He also boasts of being of the tribe of Benjamin. Every man thinks that the town where he was born is the best town ; and so Paul thought the tribe to which he belonged was the best tribe. He boasts of being a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was circumcised the eighth day. He was of the stock of Israel and of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. And Paul says, “As touching the law, I was a Pharisee.” But he was not a tame sort of Pharisee—no, no, he was a man intensely

in earnest. He says, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church." I believed that I was doing right, I believed that other people ought to do the same thing that I did, and I was not only willing to be what I was, but I was willing to compel other people to be it too." He goes on to say, "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, I was blameless." As regards the changing of garments I was correct. I knew how to cleanse myself after having touched a dead body. As to the wearing of phylacteries and dresses I was without fault. Respecting all these external peculiarities I was perfect. "But," he says, "after I had seen Christ, after I had come to a sense of what a noble character was, after there had come down to me out of heaven this picture of a true manhood, when I once saw that, oh! what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

The transition may be very sudden between intense admiration and utter contempt. A man out West opens a ledge, and finds what he thinks to be gold ore. Oh, how pleased he is! He digs out two or three bags full of it, and then covers it all up. He will not tell one of his neighbors. He immediately starts with these specimens for New York, all the while keeping his secret to himself. When he gets to the city he puts up at a hotel, and takes a handful of the ore and goes to the assayer. He thinks himself as rich as Croesus; but the assayer, as soon as he sees it, laughs at him, and says, "It is iron pyrites; there isn't a speck of gold in it." The man goes back to the hotel chopfallen and provoked, saying, "I have paid my fare, and the freight on this miserable stuff, all the way from the West for nothing!" In the morning there is no value that could be put upon that supposed treasure, and at night it is mere dirt!

Now, here is Paul. He had been seeking for the ideal of manhood. He had sought it in mean ways, thinking that because he kept time with the clock, because he observed the ritual services here and there and everywhere, he was growing in manhood. But suddenly there came to him a benign representation of manhood as embracing love and self-sacrifice and holiness; he saw the Greatest making himself the

least; he beheld the glory of God in Christ Jesus; he felt the breath of God, which is the breath of ages, working and moulding and raising all things; he saw God represented as one who was a universal Nurse, giving himself for others; and seeing this exemplification of truth and purity and heroism set forth as a pattern of manhood, he says, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." In other words, the consciousness that he was being changed into these noble moods and dispositions which are in God lifted him above and carried him beyond those things which he had been in the habit of regarding as all-important.

Faith is the instrument by which we come to a perception of those higher qualities that constitute righteousness. It is the eye by which we see invisible things. Therefore faith is not to be regarded as not good; it is to be regarded as that through which divine dispositions are discerned—dispositions which are to be our impulse, and which are brought before us so that they shall influence our whole life and character.

If this be a proper rendering of this passage in Paul's experience, and if these views of righteousness as the grand end of human endeavor and education are correct, and if faith is simply that method of mind by which we attempt to educate ourselves into higher thoughts and feelings through a new and better way of divine contact, then you will see, in the first place, that praying for faith, except in the very general way in which you pray for everything, is love's labor lost.

When I undertook to study mathematics first, I had the blindest of heads for anything of that sort, and I cried and cried many times, and got mad a great many times more; but I never thought of kneeling down and praying, "O Lord, give me a solution of this problem of the couriers." I knew

that if I was going to solve that problem of "the couriers" I must go at it with my own hand and head.

Yet men pray for faith as if it were something such that if God would give it to them there would be an illumination in their souls, and afterwards everything would go of itself; but faith is simply seeing by the super-senses. Faith is the instrument of the faculties. Faith is the working of the mind on invisible things. It is sometimes a faith that works by love, sometimes it is a faith that works by fear, and sometimes it is a faith that works by avarice or interest. We have in the 11th of Hebrews any number of instances of faith; and you will see, if you analyze them, that it works one way or another, according to circumstances, but that it is a perception of invisible things by reason of the moral nature. So, to pray for faith is like praying for intelligence. It is like praying for eyesight. That may be well if you are blind; but if a man is going to study anything does he sit down and say, "Lord, be pleased to give me eyes?" The answer is, "Eyes have you, yet you will not see. You have eyes; use them." We pray for faith as if that were an end. It is not an end; it is a means. It is percipience. It is power of mind to dart into things which are higher than the ordinary things of life. The divine influence resting on men brings the center of manhood into a higher range of faculties, and makes it easier to use them; in that sense it is proper to pray for faith. It is proper to pray that we may exercise our higher faculties, in order that we may be better men, and in order that therefore we may find it easier to discern things not seen. It is proper to pray for the fruits of faith—trust, love, hope, courage, purity, fidelity, humanity, reverence, obedience, gentleness, humility. These are what we want.

Faith is worth nothing of itself, as the eye is worth nothing of itself. The eye is worth what it sees. A man might have a bushel of eyes, and if they were in a basket they would be good for nothing. Faith is spiritual eyesight; and it is what the spiritual eyes see that is valuable, and not faith itself.

This leads to the question, "Is righteousness, then, the ground on which men are justified?" No, oh no, that is

not the ground on which they are justified. I am a writing-master, and I call up my class. I say to them, "Bring your copy-books." Here is the copy—a fine, beautiful hand, with great flourishing letters, so ornate that you cannot tell what is written. One boy shows me what he has done. I know that stubbed-handed little rogue ; I see how he has tried ; I perceive that on the whole he has made improvement ; he has succeeded so far that really I can make out some of the letters ; and I pat him on the head, and say, "Well done, my boy, well done ; you will make a writer yet ; take your seat and go on, and do not be discouraged." Does he go to his seat justified on account of the fine writing ? No. I approve of the effort he has made, I praise him, he has my good-will. The ground of his justification is simply this : that I discern in him the tendency to learn to write. I discern also that this tendency, if it continues and increases, will bring him to the end which he is seeking, and which I am seeking for him. He is justified, not on account of his attainment, but on account of my considerateness and my nourishing and brooding disposition toward him. It is *my* faith and trust in *him*, and not any actual quality that he possesses, that leads to his justification.

Now, when I have sought for righteousness, even by the inspiration of the divine Spirit, and have wrought by patience and fortitude and self-denial, and have done a thousand things, I am yet so far from the real fullness of that which is required to make a man in Christ Jesus that, when God looks upon the character which I have attained, it is rude and imperfect. It is as far from the ideal toward which I am aiming as the boy's writing is from the copy ; and if God justifies me it is on account of the something in him, and not on account of what is in me. That is to say, he has good nature ; he is generous ; he is motherly ; he is fatherly. He is father, and mother, and brother, and friend, and lover, and saviour ; and he administers out of the qualities which these names imply, and not out of the legislist's book ; and when I bring to my God the results of my strivings and attainments he accepts me and them, not because they are perfect, nor because I am perfect—not at all ; but because

he has such a nature that he can accept an imperfect thing on account of its relation to future development.

"Like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him." "For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust."

Therefore, he does not, in judging us, lay upon us those laws which he would lay upon angels in judging them.

One other point. While we depend for our justification not on our righteousness, but on the goodness of God, the end which we seek is not invalidated thereby. Do you suppose that everything that a man does in this world is commercial? I do not think that half the bargain-making in New York proceeds from selfishness. It may come more or less from these elements, but after all there is many a man who pursues methods that are very exceptionable, who does not do these things because he loves falsehood and guile. You will find that the motive which inspires him is perhaps enterprise, perhaps emulation of success, perhaps the great pressure of circumstances, perhaps even the wife and child that are living at home. Away back there is the fountain.

But suppose a man frames himself on the pattern of Christ Jesus, and suppose he does not believe in Christ, what becomes of him? In other words, is there such a necessity for technical adhesion to the Lord Jesus Christ that—if a man seeks the influence that Christ inspires all his people to seek, and if he exerts himself honestly in those directions, and if he stands before God, saying, "I acted according to the best light I had, and my endeavors were measured according to my ability"—God will reject him because he has not the brand of Christ upon him? That is the question which Peter had to solve. There was a Roman centurion, that was a just man, to whom Peter was sent; and he went to him trembling, because he thought it was not right for a Hebrew to go to a heathen; but when Peter heard the centurion's prayers, and received the revelations that were made to him, he said, "Now I perceive that in every nation where men fear God and work righteousness, they are accepted of God."

It is not necessary that you should have this thing or that

thing put on you. The thing to be had is manhood, noble, full, including every element that goes to constitute the human mind developed with power and with fruit; and every man is responsible only to the degree in which the light is brought to him in the age in which he lives, or through the institutions under whose influence he is; and if he is conscious that according to his circumstances he is *endeavoring*, not without imperfection, and not without sin, but so far as is compatible with human infirmity, to do that which is right, God will accept him.

"Well," it is said, "how can he accept him but in Jesus Christ?" Oh, fools! Why, I should think you had been brought up in a mechanic's shop where Collins's axes were made, and that you had the idea that no axes would sell which did not have "Collins" stamped on them. Do you suppose that God is working on so small and mean a scale as that? Do you suppose he looks for this name or that name, this sect or that sect? The question is not whether a man calls himself a disciple of Christ, but whether he is *Christ-like*. The question is, Has he those qualities which lead to Christ? When a man is released from the body, and soars into aerial space, if his nature is such that it loves truth and purity and holiness; if it is so pervaded with these higher qualities that, following the divine attraction, it shoots up toward God, then it will be found of God, and no janitor, nothing, can shut it out from heaven. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," says God. He is arguing against the idea that he has no right to save anybody but Jews—anybody but orthodox folks. Quality, the essential nature of the mind—it is this on which we must stand; and he who lives toward God, in sympathy with God, and like God, need not be afraid. It is not your doctrinal system, it is what your doctrinal system has done in you and upon you, that determines your destiny; and if, when you have done your best, you come far short of the final state which you are seeking, you will be saved by the bounty, by the grace, by the generosity, by the love-element in God, which ministers to you and takes care of you all the way up to the day of your death. You will be saved, not because

you have this or that stamp on you, but because you have the spirit of Christ in you—and that whether you knew him or not. Of course, in a civilized land, where that knowledge is possible, you are without excuse if you turn aside from it; but I believe there were men in antiquity who strove according to their best light to live as God would have them live; and I shall see them all in heaven. I do not doubt that I shall go there. You cannot put me in hell. I shall see these men. They were willing to give up ease, and self, and honor for the sake of living for others. In their sphere, and according to their limited instruction, they were like Jesus, who came into the world to show that God eternally is a being who does not ingurgitate the universe to feed himself, but who pours himself out with love and power upon the universe to feed them.

So, then, seek righteousness; but not for self-justifying and conceited reasons. Seek a nobler life and nobler dispositions. Be in sympathy with God. Look up to him. Bring him near to you day by day. Have that discernment, that faith, that inward sight, by which you shall realize the sympathy of God, the presence of God, the love of God, and the genial, the sweet, the soul-inspiring influence of God. If you have the power of the inspiration of God present with you, you will find it easy to get over faults, easy to do things that otherwise would be unattainable, easy to ripen.

Oh, how well things ripen if the sun will only shine; but when the sun is laggard; when, in June, the Eastern winds prevail, and there are dribbling, grumbling showers, the strawberries will not hasten; they swell, and are vapid or sour; but so soon as the sun wakes up, and drives away the clouds, and comes forth, pouring the effulgence of its beams on all below, out of its light and heat come sugar, color and fragrant odors. Then the strawberries ripen, and all the region round about matures.

Without the sun, a few things could be ripened in the greenhouse; but you cannot have a greenhouse for all the world. A few men could be ripened in the synagogue, or in the church; but now the Sun of Righteousness has arisen upon all the earth; and whosoever in any nation will fear

God, and do justly, and love mercy, is living by faith of God, which is faith of Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God for the truth. This inspiration never fails. The more we employ it, the more sensitive we become to it; and the nearer we rise toward God, the stronger the attraction, till, with the apostle, in the end we shall say, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, the time of my departure is at hand, and the crown of righteousness that God hath laid up for me I shall soon have." The crown of righteousness is the coronation of the soul in its perfection.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.\*

ALMIGHTY God, we commend to thy fatherly care these dear children. Thou hast lent them, and sent them forth from thy presence; and they are precious in the sight of their parents, and beloved of us; but they are dearer to thee. We rejoice that it is in the nature of greatness not to despise littleness; that it is in the nature of holiness to be deeply drawn towards impurity and imperfection; that it is the divine nature to inspire in all things rectitude, and enlargement, and perfection. And so we come bringing our children to thee, though we are conscious of their weakness and insufficiency and faults, and all the liabilities that are in them, knowing that no nurse nor mother hath for them the tenderness which thou hast. Thou art the God of little children; and thou, blessed Saviour, didst repeat thy Father's disposition when thou wert upon earth. Thou didst rebuke those who would separate little children from thee, and didst take them up in thine arms, and didst lay thine hands upon them and bless them; and we rejoice that we may believe that still in thought thou dost caress our children; that still thou dost guard them by the effluence of thine own heart; and that toward them in especial thy providence is love.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that these parents, who have openly avowed their determination to bring up their children in the fear of God and in the love of the Saviour, may be strengthened to the full performance of the obligations which they have assumed. We pray that their own lives may be a gospel to these children, and that their dispositions may teach them what are Christian dispositions. May they, while they thus sow the seed of good instruction, reap abundantly of comfort and joy in themselves.

We pray for all the children that are in this great congregation. We pray for parents in their care of their children. We pray for parents whose children are sick. We pray for parents who have been bereaved, and are mourning the loss of their little ones. Open to them the heavens that they may behold them, not lost, but glorified. Bring them nearer the other life, the invisible kingdom, and the joys which this world seeks vainly to imitate. Grant that through our sorrow and through the ministration of thy comforting Spirit, we may learn the height, the depth, the length, the breadth, and the glory of the joys that prevail above us. For while we sigh here, the chorus swells just beyond; and all our groanings, all our sorrows, are lost and swept upward by the grandeur of those chants of immortal love which are evermore heard in thy presence.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant that all who are bearing burdens in life may be enabled, touched by the divine nature, to bear them more manfully. May those who are in trouble or despondency learn how to acquit themselves like soldiers in a campaign, and how to harden themselves against trouble, and loss, and fear, and danger, and death itself.

We pray that thou wilt grant that more and more thy servants

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\* Immediately following the baptism of children.

may be strengthened in all goodness, and may feel called to build in themselves the noblest manhood, knowing that thus they shall interpret the best views of God.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest, not alone upon this church as a church, nor alone upon this congregation as a congregation. We pray thou wilt grant thy blessing upon all that are with us from Sabbath to Sabbath, strangers in a strange land, and upon all that are in thy providence casually brought together here. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless them, not alone in the reading of thy word, and in the singing of sweet songs of Zion, but in the thoughts which they send back to those whom they have left behind, scattered every whither.

We pray for all who are in discouragement, and whose affairs are broken or are breaking. We pray for all who face tribulation. We pray for all who are of an unstable mind. We pray for all who have for any reason lost the light of the world and of life. We pray for those who are in any trouble. O thou that causest the sun to rise, thou Master of the night and of the day, thou that dost chase the darkness around and around the globe, and that yet shalt destroy it, when thy sun shall shine a thousand years, grant to those that sit in darkness a great light. Beam down upon them and toward them, we pray thee, thy thought and thy love.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the labors of this church, upon its schools, upon its missions, upon those instrumentalities which have been ordained for the relief of men in various directions, and which are pursued under the ministration of thy dear Spirit. Grant that those who water may be abundantly watered. But may none feel that they are doing a meritorious service. May every one feel that it is an honor to be permitted to labor for the welfare of men in the kingdom of Christ Jesus.

We pray that thou wilt more and more unite churches that stand in a common Christian circle. May they learn to look charitably and peacefully and sympathetically upon each other. May they co-operate in all useful labors.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt civilize the consciences of men. We pray that thou wilt teach them love, and faith, and hope; and that thou wilt teach them that true justice is of love, and so of God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt pour out thy Spirit upon the land in which we live. Especially we pray that thou wilt grant unto all parts of this land where there are troubles, or where there is dis-temperature, that guiding wisdom and overruling providence by which every difficulty shall be amicably settled.

We pray for the President of these United States, and all who are joined to him in authority. We pray for the Congress assembled. We pray for all courts of justice, for all judges, for all magistrates. We pray for the whole people.

We pray, not alone that thou wilt look upon our own nation, but that thou wilt look upon all the nations of the earth. Grant that their laws may be improved, that their institutions may be made more benign, and that intelligence may still work toward refine-

ment, and purity, and strength. We pray that the day may speedily come when all nations shall be converted to thee, and when thy kingdom shall be established from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

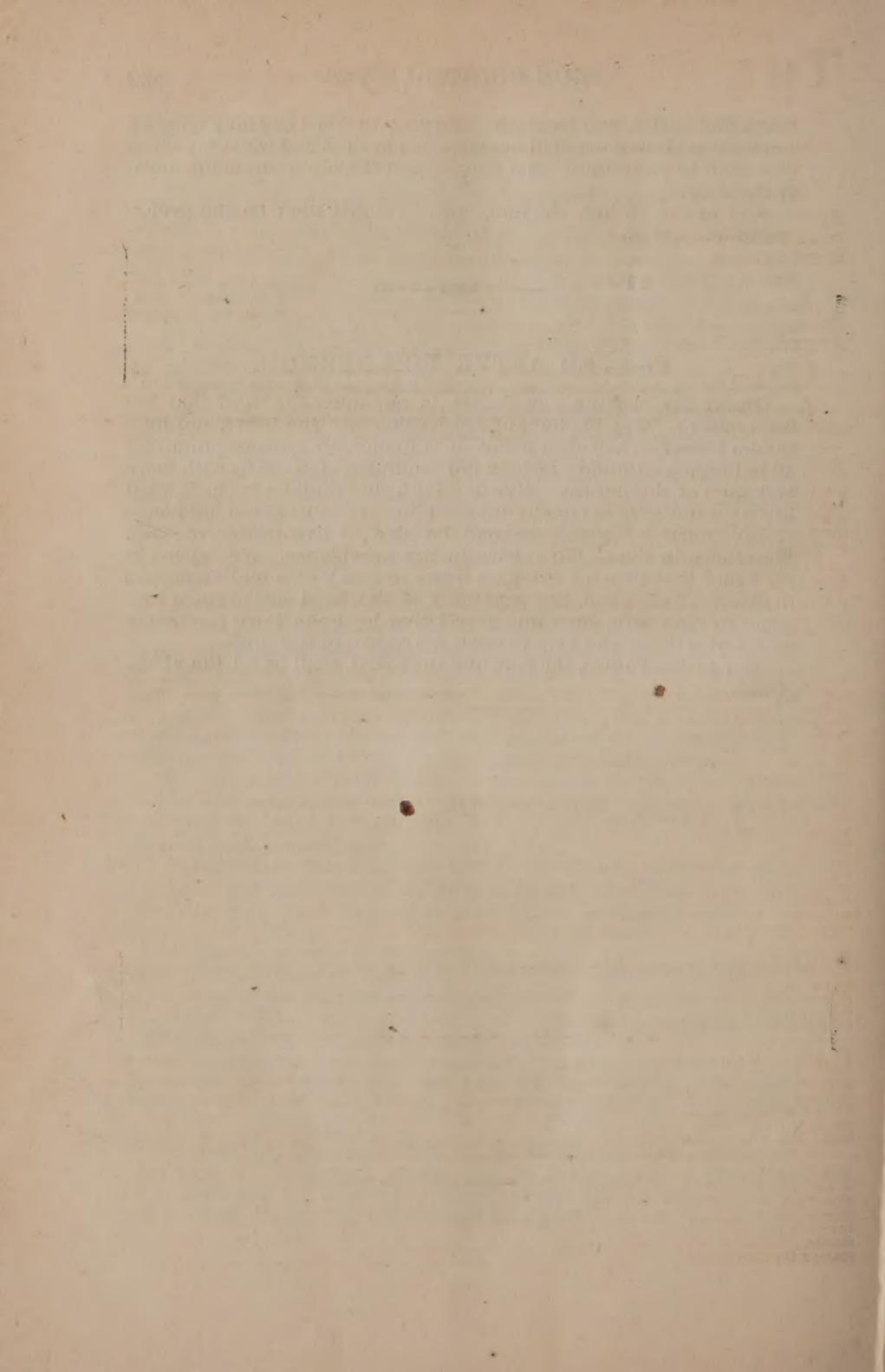
And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be the praise, evermore. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT thy blessing, our Father, to rest upon the word that has been spoken. May the light of truth shine into the heart, and may the darkness flee, and clear away all prejudice, all misconception, and all ignorance. Imbue us with a holy courage. Inspire us with more and more of thy nature. Give us a faith that shall be to our inward life what our eyes are to our outward life. Give us those influences of thy Spirit by which we shall be able to live nearer to thee. We rejoice in thee, We rejoice in thy providence. We rejoice in the belief that thou art bringing home so many sons and daughters to glory. And when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head, may we be with them, and help to swell the chorus of thy praise.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be all the glory. *Amen.*



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